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Report of the Administrator

I. PURPOSE

1. The present report is in response to paragraph 5 of Executive Board decision 94/6, in which the Board requested the Administrator to report on the activities of the 22 HIV and Development National Professional Officers (NPOs).

II. BACKGROUND

2. The network of HIV and Development NPOs was approved in principle by the Governing Council in paragraph 23 of its decision 93/35.

3. In its decision 94/5 of 18 February 1994, the Executive Board authorized the Administrator to complete the hiring of the NPOs subject to a review by the HIV/AIDS Inter-Agency Working Group of the terms of reference of the posts and their proposed location. The Board further specified that the initial contracts would be for a six-month period pending later review and approval by the Board.

4. At its March 1994 meeting in Zambia, the HIV/AIDS Inter-Agency Working Group expressed its full support for UNDP plans to strengthen its capacity at the country level to respond to the HIV epidemic and recognized the role of the Resident Coordinator in ensuring coordination of the United Nations system, as described in General Assembly resolution 47/199. The Working Group endorsed the terms of reference for the HIV and Development NPO posts in so far as they pertained to supporting the work of the Resident Representative in increasing understanding of HIV as a pervasive development issue; building national capacity to mount an effective, broad-based and sustainable response to the

epidemic; and strengthening the capacity of UNDP and the United Nations system in-country to support such a national response. The Working Group further stated that the HIV and Development NPOs could also assist, where appropriate, the United Nations system in its efforts to improve HIV/AIDS-related coordination and collaboration. The statement of the Working Group was presented to the Executive Board in paragraph 17 of document DP/1994/7.

5. In its decision 94/6 of 10 May 1994, the Executive Board authorized the Administrator to recruit the HIV and Development NPOs as per decision 93/35, that is, for the full 1994-1995 biennium.

III. NPO ACTIVITIES

6. The candidate identification and recruitment process was carried out in consultation with the other co-sponsoring organizations of the new Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS. In some cases, it has taken time to identify appropriately qualified candidates because of the combination of skills required for HIV and development work, synthesizing as it does a range of disciplines in a manner that is both new and still emerging. The recruitment process is nearing completion with more than half of the HIV and Development NPO posts now filled.

7. The individual recruited for the HIV and Development NPO post in Rwanda was killed during the recent war and a new recruitment procedure has had to be undertaken. In Haiti, the recruitment process was halted owing to political instability in the country.

8. As outlined in paragraph 11 of document DP/1994/5, the HIV and Development Programme is mandated to provide substantive and policy guidance to the 22 NPOs. Briefing papers and background documentation have been supplied to all officers currently in place. In-service training and other support is to be provided in collaboration with other United Nations system organizations.

9. The activities carried out by the HIV and Development NPOs reflect UNDP focus on national capacity-strengthened and broad-based programming that is both effective and sustainable. In the Philippines, the NPO has worked closely with the Government's socio-economic planning agency to help to conceptualize the HIV epidemic as a development issue which they must address. Further to this initiative, she has supported the joint Asian Development Bank/UNDP research project into the socio-economic implications of HIV in her country. NPOs in the Central African Republic and Kenya are also supporting the UNDP Partnership Programme to Enhance National Capacity to Analyse and Respond to the Psychological, Social and Economic Determinants and Consequences of the HIV Epidemic.

10. Capacity-building is a core element of the NPO's work in Uganda through his involvement in finalizing the UNDP preparatory assistance document, which addresses the conceptual and operational problems that currently inhibit broad-based responses to the epidemic. The document emphasizes the interdependence of poverty and HIV, both as cause and consequence, and highlights the role poverty reduction strategies can play as entry points into

effective work to limit the spread and impact of HIV. Similarly, the NPO in Honduras has linked with key figures in the Government, non-governmental organizations and United Nations specialized agencies in a process of building consensus on and commitment to multisectoral planning and coordination in response to the HIV epidemic.

11. Developing partnerships with civil society groups and institutions has been a feature of all NPO work. In Ukraine, civil society bodies are still emerging in the aftermath of political change and the NPO there has already linked with religious groups and organizations representing affected minority groups in a process of creating an ethical and non-discriminatory environment that enables people both to protect themselves from and live with HIV. Placing ethics, the law and human rights at the centre of both analysis and response has long been a feature of UNDP engagement with the HIV epidemic and has led to the creation of regional networks of concerned parties and individuals, including those infected with HIV, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean. NPOs in these regions have continued to support such networks at both regional and national levels.

12. NPOs in Honduras and Swaziland, as elsewhere, have played a crucial part in supporting efforts to improve the coordination of United Nations agencies in their HIV-related work through providing secretariat services for inter-agency HIV task forces and theme groups. In Ukraine, the NPO has linked with the staff of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to explore joint policy-making and programming that address the interdependent phenomena of drug use and HIV transmission. In all their work, HIV and Development NPOs have worked in collaboration with and complementarity to their colleagues in the other co-sponsoring agencies of the new Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS.

IV. ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

13. The Executive Board may wish to:

Take note of the present report.